

(WASHINGTON, DC) Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) today expressed in a letter to Governor Charlie Crist his concern that the Holocaust Documentation and Education Center's Holocaust Rail Car Renovation Project may be cut from this year's state budget. The Holocaust-era rail car from Poland is one of many used by the Nazis during the Holocaust to transport millions of Jews to concentration camps and their untimely deaths.

Joined in this effort were Representatives Ron Klein (FL-22), Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL-20), Alan Grayson (FL-8), and Ted Deutch (FL-19). (Please find attached a copy of the letter)

"This issue came to my attention when local Jewish community leaders, including Holocaust survivor Norman Frajman, contacted my office. As I have said many times, I will always fight hatred and intolerance wherever it exists, for human freedom depends on the presence of justice, the justice that was denied to so many during the dark days of World War II. To ignore that lesson is unforgivable and this Holocaust-era rail car is tangible proof of the horrors that occur when we fail to respond to injustice," Hastings said.

"I am grateful to the Holocaust Documentation and Education Center for putting names and faces to the victims of the *Shoah* and I will continue to support their essential mission to educate Floridians and the world alike of the dangers of hate and intolerance.

"Governor Crist supported the initial preservation phase of this important project and I urge him to make the decision that we all know is right and just once again."

The text of Representative Hastings' letter follows.

May 26, 2010

The Honorable Charlie Crist
The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor Crist:

We urge you to support the \$250,000 Department of State grant in Budget Line Item 3175C for the Holocaust Documentation and Education Center's Rail Car Renovation Project. It has recently come to our attention that funding for this unique and worthy endeavor, which benefits all Floridians, has been listed as a 2010-11 Florida TaxWatch "Turkey." We know you have evaluated and wisely rejected some of their recommendations in the past and hope you will do so this time. The initial preservation phase for this meritorious project was funded in 2008 with your help and this grant money will help complete the renovation and preservation of this historical vestige.

Millions of victims were torn from their homes and hauled away to Nazi concentration camps in rail cars just like the Center's Holocaust-era rail car obtained from Poland. Today, there are only nine such Holocaust-era rail cars still in existence in the United States. As home to the world's third-largest population of Holocaust survivors, as well as thousands of their descendants, Florida is a natural destination for this artifact. The Museum will be the first museum in North America to tell the story of the Holocaust in both English and Spanish, and it will be accessible to millions of individuals and families who otherwise might not have the opportunity to engage directly with these materials.

Today, we see genocide still occurring around the world. The Rail Car Project serves as a physical reminder of the horrors possible when hate and violence are left unchecked. Not only is this project an invaluable educational asset in teaching the horrors of genocide, in compliance with Florida's Holocaust Education Mandate, but it will also be an enormous attractor for scholars, historians, and tourists. This tangible link to the past is especially critical as Holocaust revisionists grow in number while fewer and fewer Holocaust survivors remain to tell their stories.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important request. We urge you to keep this essential finding in the budget and ensure that Florida and the world never forget the Holocaust. Please do not hesitate to contact our offices with further questions. With warm regards,

Sincerely,

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Ron Klein
Member of Congress

Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

Alan Grayson
Member of Congress

Ted Deutch
Member of Congress

Congressman Alcee L. Hastings is Vice Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, a senior member of the House Rules Committee, and Co-Chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Commission.

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 [Letter to Gov Crist re Holocaust Museum rail car project May 2010.pdf](#)